

26TH ANNUAL

# Cherry Blossom Festival

Essex County  
Branch  
Brook Park

•  
Newark,  
New Jersey

April 19, 2002

"An Evening  
with  
Cole Porter"



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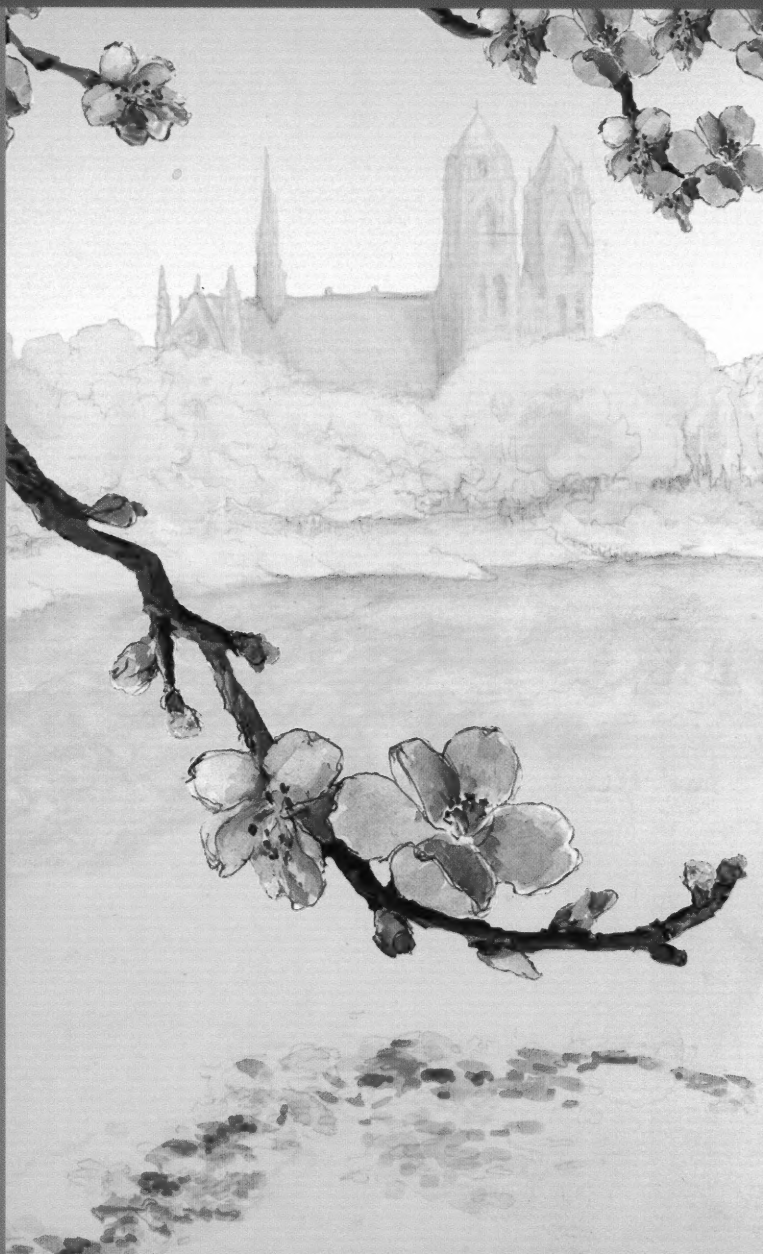
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# Branch Brook Park Alliance

## CO-CHAIRS

Barbara Bell Coleman  
Patricia E. Ryan

## VICE-CHAIRS

Patricia Chambers  
Kathleen P. Galop  
James P. Lecky  
Mary Sue Sweeney Price

## SECRETARY

Patricia Capawana

## EX-OFFICIO

James W. Treffinger, County Executive  
County of Essex

Sharpe James, Mayor  
City of Newark

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., President  
Essex County Freeholders

Daniel K. Salvante, Assistant County Administrator  
County of Essex

Sarah M. Hanson, Acting Director  
Essex County Department of Parks,  
Recreation and Cultural Affairs

The Branch Brook Park Alliance, formed in the fall of 1999, is comprised of individuals and organizations, including the City of Newark, that have come together to work cooperatively with the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to help restore, renew, and assist in the maintenance of the park for the enjoyment of Essex County residents and its many visitors from around the world. The Alliance's goal is to raise public awareness and support the rehabilitation of Branch Brook Park to ensure that its historic Olmsted landscape design endures.

*The Branch Brook Park Alliance is funded in part by grants from the State of New Jersey – Honorable Kevin O'Toole, The Prudential Foundation, The MCJ Foundation, and the Schumann Fund for New Jersey. The Alliance is also assisted by a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of State.*

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# Cherry Blossom Festival

## E v e n i n g   E v e n t s

5:30 pm

Guided Bus Tours

6:00 pm

"Taste of Newark" Cocktail Reception

7:30 pm

Welcome

Acknowledgements

Patricia E. Ryan, Co-Chair

Barbara Bell Coleman, Co-Chair

Dessert • Coffee • Cocktail Service

"AN EVENING WITH COLE PORTER"

New Jersey Pops

Michael Buglio, Music Director

Vocalists

Julia Fischer

Mark Jacoby

Dancers

Todd Burnsed

Mark Burrell

Cynthia Muller

Michelle Pampena

Joseph Lanteri, *Choreographer*

## HISTORY OF BRANCH BROOK PARK

The vision for Branch Brook Park had its beginnings in the 1860s when the City of Newark Park Commissioners retained Olmsted & Vaux to locate a park site. Their 1867 report recommended land which, because of its accessibility to the public and high elevations, still comprises portions of Branch Brook Park.

Acquiring this land required approval from the New Jersey State Legislature. Since development of public parks was still a new idea, it was not until 1895 that the legislature passed the country's first law enabling the creation of a county park commission. Groundbreaking for Branch Brook Park took place on June 15, 1895. At that time, just 25 acres were dedicated to Essex County parks. Today, the county maintains nearly 6,000 acres of public parkland.

Initially, the landscape architect and engineering firm of Bogart and Barrett developed plans for Branch Brook Park. They were succeeded in 1898 by the Olmsted Brothers, the landscape architect firm which completed the park. Today, the park covers 359.72 acres and has 36.61 acres of waterways.

Branch Brook Park is historic in many regards. During the Civil War, land that became part of the park's Southern Division served as Camp Frelinghuysen, an area used for mustering northern New Jersey's Union troops. Land once owned by Paul Elias Heller, later donated for the park, served as the eastern terminal of the U.S. Aerial Mail Service. What's now known as the park's Extension was made possible through generous land donations from the Ballantine, Keen, Righter, McAndrews and Heller families. Substantial work in the Extension — building brownstone walls and preparing the river bed — was performed by Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers during the Depression.

Most significant of all of the park's features is the annual cherry blossom display. In 1927, Caroline Bamberger Fuld donated the trees which still contribute to the springtime magnificence.

In 1976, The Newark Cherry Blossom Festival was founded to celebrate this flowering of cherry trees; the festival organizers also nominated the park to the State and National Registers of Historic Places, which awarded designation in 1980 and 1981, respectively.

The recently established Branch Brook Park Alliance (BBPA), in partnership with the Essex County Park System, is committed to celebrating the park and to restoring and renewing its grandeur. The nationally recognized landscape architecture firm of Rhodeside & Harwell has been retained to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report, Treatment and Management Plan for the park.

The collaborative efforts of the Essex County Park System and BBPA are ensuring that Branch Brook Park's historic Olmsted landscape design endures.

*(Excerpts from Branch Brook Park – An Historical Perspective® prepared by Kathleen P. Galop, Esq. Information obtained from the Annual Reports and Minutes of the Essex County Park Commission and the historical files of the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs; Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress; the "Report on a Site for a Park at Newark" prepared by Olmsted & Vaux; the Nomination of Branch Brook Park to the State and National Registers of Historic Places; and The Star-Ledger.)*